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RAIL TRAVEL newsletter

25¢

VOL. 3 NO. 11
FIRST ISSUE OF
JUNE 1973
#61

ON THE COVER: Amtrak's summer season begins with the departure of No. 6, the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, from Oakland on June 10, the first daily train under the augmented summer schedule. A slightly weatherbeaten SP "F" diesel unit #6453 is at the front of the 11-car (plus one deadhead) train as it loads a small number of passengers this quiet, chilly, foggy Sunday morning. There is no dome on the train today, since the six consists required for daily operation are to use 4 ex-SP full dome lounges and 2 ex-B&O/C&O low-profile domes, the latter unavailable as yet (two such cars are reportedly in the shops and one similar car has been running on the Chicago-New Orleans PANAMA LIMITED.) Photo by Message Media.

LETTERS

Commenting on the analysis of SP running times for the TEXAS CHIEF (RTN, Second May issue), may we counter some of the statements with the following:

Mr. Maylath is not dividing the time properly. Why should it take 65 minutes to run from Dallas to Corsicana? Why not 60 minutes, the same as the SUNBEAM? The track is in excellent condition and there is no stop or crew change at Ennis as with the SUNBEAM. Why the slower running in leaving the city? Conditions are the same, in fact one former main crossing, Forest Avenue, has been eliminated as a major source of traffic due to street relocation. Dallas has not grown any in that particular direction. Remember the freights are running over this segment with ease at 60mph, and in fact fudging on that. Why not 79 for passenger trains? Be realistic.

Why should it take 1hr 30mins to run from Corsicana to Hearne when freights have been timed in as little as 1hr 21mins? The authorized freight speed is not 60 but 70 for the BLUE STREAK MERCHANDISE. This track is in better condition now than in SUNBEAM days and is capable of far more than 79mph altho the absence of ATS would preclude such. At 79 which is what the freights are frequently timed at, 1hr 20mins would be a snap and should be insisted on with track of this quality.

Why are 10 minutes needlessly absorbed at Hearne, since it is not large enough to be a satisfactory generator of traffic and all labor contracts now in force permit operation of all crews thru from Dallas to Houston (passenger service only) and union officials have pledged their support of such an operation?

As for Hearne-Houston, on March 10, for instance, a freight left Tower 26 in Houston at 8pm and arrived in Hearne at 11:10pm. Subtract 10 minutes for the time from Tower 26 to the station and it leaves 3 hours. This train obviously did not hold to a 40mph limit because it averaged 40. It was running 50-55mph. The speed limit was not reduced from 50 to 40 until Jan. 12, 1972, which was for purposes of harassing Amtrak. All train crewmen agree that 40 is unnecessary except in specific areas where slow orders exist. Even observing these slow orders it should be possible for the Amtrak train to cover this segment in 2½ hours, which would be an average speed of 48mph. With tie replacements this should be brought up to 79mph, the same as the other, possibly with the exception of the 20 miles between Navasota and Hempstead where rail is of 1929 vintage. It is 110# rail, however, and should be good for 60 with proper rail detector car scrutiny. All other rail is controlled cooled, 112# or heavier, and ballast conditions are good.

All of these speed restrictions the railroads are dreaming up, notably the SP and MoPac, are completely arbitrary in most cases and pressure must be kept upon them to restore realistic limits such as existed in the '40's and '50's where many thousands

(continued on page 19)

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 11 (Whole No. 61), First Issue of June, 1973. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709. Subscription $6.00 per year; single copy 25¢. STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large; Kenneth Maylath, East Coast Correspondent; Peter Roehm, Northeastern Correspondent; Doug Ellis, Staff Photographer.
Scheduled mailing date for this issue: June 15, 1973.

THE ENERGY CRISIS BACKLASH BEGINS

The sudden appearance of a "crisis" in energy is making disbelievers of many. On June 8 Congress was told by a group of law-enforcement officers that they suspect that the shortage of petroleum products is "phony," involving possible collusion by the big oil companies on an international scale.

That the energy crisis would be used as a lever to move forward the controversial Alaska pipeline, opposed by environmentalists, was apparently confirmed June 13 in President Nixon's television address on the state of the economy, in which he asked Congress to move ahead in approving the pipeline.

The Massachusetts Attorney General told Congress that the major oil corporations are using the crisis as a way of squeezing the little man out of the business. A number of independent gasoline dealers have closed recently because of the alleged shortage of gas in the U.S.

The Wall Street Journal reports (June 7) that the Federal Trade Commission is investigating the oil industry and the proclaimed fuel shortage. The Senate Interior Committee, headed by Sen. Henry Jackson of Washington, will hear the results of the FTC's investigation later. The Justice Department is seeking court orders to subpoena nine big oil companies for information about alleged natural gas shortages.

In a Washington wracked by scandals and with a widening credibility gap, it is difficult for some to believe that the energy crisis is an actuality. If real conservation of energy were to result, with greater use of trains and other more efficient vehicles, much good would come to our pollution-and-congestion-stifled nation. However, the heavy-handed manner in which the energy crisis is being proclaimed may result in enough backlash that little of value is accomplished.

SENATE COMMITTEE WANTS TO GIVE AMTRAK $125 MILLION

The Senate Commerce Committee, one of four committees to hold hearings on the Amtrak appropriations bill for the coming fiscal year, reported out a bill June 6 that raises Amtrak's appropriation from the Administration's requested $93 million to $125 million. A clause in the bill would also allow Amtrak to run auto-train type service anywhere in the country, overruling state regulations that may prohibit this type of rail service. In earlier testimony before Congress, Amtrak President Roger Lewis said that the proposed $93 million dollar budget is "tight," but that Amtrak could make due with it if necessary.

Meanwhile, the railroads are asking Amtrak for more money for running the corporation's trains, reports the National Ass'n of RR Passengers Newsletter (May). The president of the American Association of Railroads, Stephen Ailes, said that besides PC's request for $32 million more per year, the 11 other member railroads would want about $52 million to make up their costs. If the Penn Central request is approved, the other roads will also come with their hand out.

STOP AT LAKE TAHOE FOR SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR IS SCHEDULED

The long-awaited stop at Truckee, California, serving the vast Lake Tahoe playland, will become a reality September 9, when Amtrak begins it fall schedules, the corporation announced this week. Ski areas adjoin the mountain town, as well as major resorts, public camping areas and gambling casinos. Truckee was traditionally a station on the CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO route of SP until Amtrak discontinued it when it began operations May 1, 1971.

SUMMER'S HERE: ALL TRAINS LATE

A look around our area indicates all long-distance trains running well behind schedule, even with the daily operation that should take some pressure off the crowded tri-weekly through trains. In the latest figures available from Amtrak, the COAST STARLIGHT ran only 3.8% on time in April, down from 29.6% in March. The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR increased to 48.1% from 26.9% in the same period.

YOU CAN RIDE AMTRAK - PROVIDED YOU'RE A BIGWIG

A special train from Oakland to San Luis Obispo, California ran June 8 for bigshots of Pacific Gas and Electric Co. Because the southbound COAST STARLIGHT that day was running about 2½ hours late, the cars could not be attached to that train and reach their destination in time. So a special 4-car train consisting of a coach, diner, lounge, and a round-end observation yanked off a COAST DAYLIGHT consist left Oakland at about the time the STARLIGHT should have gone. But revenue passengers were not permitted aboard; they had to take a bus connection southward if they were making a connection in L.A. Upon reaching SLO, the PG&E train took no waiting Amtrak passengers, but deadheaded all the way to Los Angeles, leaving paying riders to wait for the late train or take a bus. Speculation was that this state of affairs occurred in part because one member of the PG&E board of directors is also a member of the board of directors of the Southern Pacific.

ANOTHER RE-ROUTING OF THE SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR

Amtrak train #6 was just leaving Oakland for Chicago about the time a derailment occurred on an SP freight train at Martinez, CA the morning of June 7. The ZEPHYR was held at Richmond while Amtrak operations in Southern California figured out what to do, without the capable assistance of SP. It was decided to re-route the train over cooperative Santa Fe track from Richmond to Stockton, and thence by SP to Sacramento. All this took about 4 hours, calling out a Santa Fe crew, etc. to navigate the train over strange tracks. It required a backing maneuver into the Sacramento station, consuming more time, and no doubt leaving quite a few irate passengers. An easier solution would have been to pull the train backwards from Richmond over SP all the way to Altamont and thence northward. Sacramento passengers could have been bused to Roseville to get the train, and hours saved. But Amtrak doesn't run SP and SP doesn't run Amtrak, and does Amtrak run Amtrak?

DECISION IS DELAYED ON TEXAS CHIEF RE-ROUTING

The arbitration panel that is to decide the case of Amtrak vs. SP in the dispute over the proposed Dallas-Houston routing met June 7 but did not reach a decison. The panel called for more information and SP and Amtrak will report back July 2. Thus the train cannot run before that time. Amtrak had hoped it could begin service on June 10. The arbitration committee consists of Leo D. Welch (chairman), a 75-year old former oil man; James A. Farmer of Amtrak; and John M. Budd of SP. A 4½ hour closed hearing was held after Mr. Welch chased out a woman reporter who was present.

ANTI-AMTRAK PUSH STILL GOING AT GREYHOUND

One of Greyhound's most recent efforts to have Amtrak funds cut in Congress is a big ad showing a bus and a train with the slogan "We wear the same colors but we don't run in the red." The ad indicates that it's "unAmerican" not to operate at a profit. An article in Business Week magazine (June 9) reproduced the ad and discusses the campaign.

IMPORTANT CHANGES ON THE SAN DIEGAN ROUTE

Amtrak has just announced, effective June 10, schedule changes for the Los Angeles-San Diego corridor trains, with the addition of a fourth train on Fridays and Sundays (which will also run on July 4 and Labor Day--Sept. 3). The trip between the first and second largest California cities is speeded up as much as twenty minutes. These schedules do not appear in the current timetable. One-way fare for the trip is $5.75. Thanks to John Baxter for this info.

770	772
Daily	Daily
8 00 am	10 30 a
8 35 am	11 05 a
8 51 am	11 21 a
9 19 am	11 49 a
9 39 am	12 09 p
9 59 am	12 29 p
10 35 am	1 05 p

page 4

Urban-Suburban Transit

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MASS TRANSIT QUESTION STARTS TO WARM UP

The whole climate of opinion on rapid transit may be changing in Los Angeles. With the election just past of the city's new Mayor, Tom Bradley, the area now has a leader who is outspokenly in favor of building a rapid transit system in the L.A. basin. The system Bradley has in mind is a 116-mile network that would cost up to $7 billion, and the new black Mayor has told the press that he would like to see construction begun by 1975. The Southern Calif. Rapid Transit District reportedly will adopt the plan recommended by its consultants. L.A. voters would then have to approve it, probably in an election a year from now. Construction of the system would take about 12 years, and might be financed partly by an increased sales tax, as with the BART system up North. Bradley won the election over long-time incumbent Sam Yorty by running on a platform that included leadership in the rapid transit field as a campaign promise.

ANOTHER CRISIS IN TRANSPORTATION PROCLAIMED

Senator John V. Tunney of California called a hearing early this month in L.A. on a proposed $8 million Senate measure to study ground transit between San Diego and Vancouver, B.C. Startling figures were read off, indicating the immense increases projected in travel along the West Coast by the end of this century. The capacity of California's transportation system will have to be multiplied by 4 to handle 200 million projected travelers by the year 2000. "You cannot go on tearing up the countryside with freeways" or keep building more new airports, Tunney stated. Fast ground transit via rail was the mode most discussed, including the use of 300-mph tracked air cushion vehicles, magnetic levitation machines, and other farout paraphernalia. The nation's most hazardous air corridor, by a factor of 3, is the S.F.-L.A. route, one expert explained. And Amtrak isn't even thinking of adding another, overnight train to the route.

TRANSIT NEWS IN BRIEF:

THE INFAMOUS PROFESSOR Hilton of UCLA, who has long been proclaiming the death of the passenger train, thinks rapid transit is equally out. "Ignorance, pure ignorance," Hilton was quoted in the L.A. Times (June 3), "I think the rapid transit movement is at its apogee and will be discredited entirely in 1980. Look at BART. We may have wasted an enormous amount of money before this movement runs its course." Hilton prefers wasting money on automobiles and buses...

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION Administration announced May 23 a grant of $7.7 million to the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority of Buffalo, NY to assist in purchase of seven of the 2-county region's bus companies and to buy new buses. May 29 the agency announced a $1.1 million grant to Denver to help buy 28 conventional and 4 propane-powered buses, including fare boxes, 2-way radios, passenger shelters and maintenance equipment. A $38.8 million grant was announced May 25 to the N.Y.C. Transit Authority to help purchase 198 new rail passenger cars for the city's subway system...

(continued on page 18)

774	776		771	773	775	777
Friday & Sunday	Daily		Daily	Daily	Daily	Friday & Sunday
4 30 pm	7 55 pm	Los Angeles	9 35 am	3 35 pm	7 05 pm	11 05 pm
5 05 pm	8 30 pm	Fullerton	9 00 am	3 00 pm	6 30 pm	10 30 pm
5 21 pm	8 46 pm	Santa Ana	8 42 am	2 42 pm	6 12 pm	10 12 pm
5 49 pm	9 14 pm	San Clemente	8 12 am	2 12 pm	5 42 pm	9 42 pm
6 09 pm	9 34 pm	Oceanside	7 51 am	1 51 pm	5 21 pm	9 21 pm
6 29 pm	9 54 pm	Del Mar	7 30 am	1 30 pm	5 00 pm	9 00 pm
7 05 pm	10 30 pm	San Diego	7 00 am	1 00 pm	4 30 pm	8 30 pm

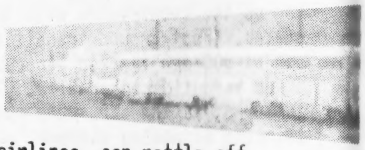
page

HAROLD GRAHAM OUT WEST

Amtrak's head of Marketing came to San Francisco for a June 4 press conference and to accept an award from the city's Convention and Visitors Bureau for being "the commercial concern which did most to promote tourism" to San Francisco last year. With him were Edwin Edel, Amtrak's top Public Relations man, a representative of the Ted Bates advertising agency that handles the rail corporation's promotion, and Passenger Service Representative Gay Anderson, who is assigned to West Coast trains.

The award, a wooden illuminated cable car, sat on a table of Mr. Graham's hotel suite while a cassette recorder played a new Amtrak radio jingle. Mr. Graham talked long and enthusiastically about Amtrak's future. Producing from his briefcase one copy each of new route brochures just off the press for the EMPIRE BUILDER and the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA done in multi-colors by Rand McNally. There were as yet no extras to pass around. He explained how the map maker had specially superimposed several different maps to show the rail route along with mountains, rivers, highways, and other features--an expensive job.

Photos from Message Media.



This marketing expert--he spent 30 years with the airlines--can rattle off statistics enough to impress 'most any reporter. The COAST STARLIGHT carries the highest percentage of young people of all Amtrak trains. Between April 1972 and April 1973 ridership Oakland-Los Angeles increased 118%. Between Oakland and Seattle it jumped 226%. The beginning of daily operations for the summer on that route and on the San Francisco-Chicago SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR was one of the factors that brought these promotion men out West. Would Amtrak continue to keep these trains on a daily basis after the summer? It's obviously desirable to have all your trains running daily, said Graham, since it promotes more business over the entire system. Amtrak will be looking closely at the ridership generated by the daily service this summer, and will keep the trains daily if patronage proves to be satisfactory.

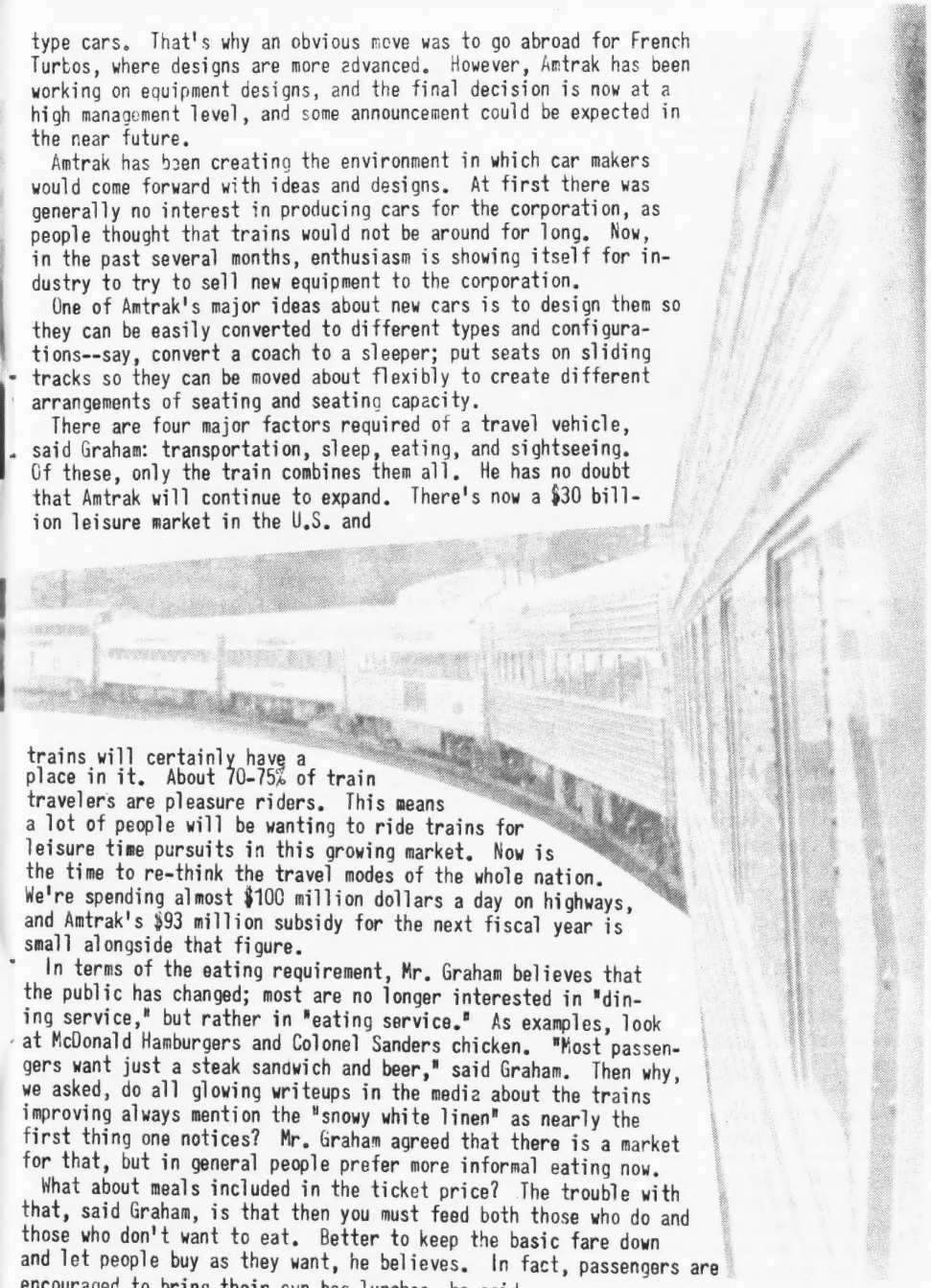
What about establishing an overnight Bay Area to Los Angeles train--restoring the LARK? This was a logical step to look at, said Graham. However, his response suggested that Amtrak was far from considering it. He brought up a number of objections, such as the fact that the air fare on the route is the lowest for such a distance in the nation. There are obviously many other factors to consider, however, such as the social costs involved in the harum-scarum travel over that route, and the fact that a train would be competing most with automobiles, but there wasn't time to get into deeper discussion. From a strictly marketing standpoint, Mr. Graham is well aware of important statistics. Ultimate decisions will need to take into account other facets of Amtrak's mandate, some of which are outlined in the Harbridge House report discussed in our last issue.

What about new equipment for Amtrak, aside from the locomotives and Turbo Trains that are coming? Has Amtrak made decisions yet about the types of rolling stock it will order? The reasons for Amtrak's going slow in ordering equipment are that there are virtually no American car builders tooled up to construct equipment that would fit Amtrak's nationwide needs. If one ordered cars now, they'd be 1950's type cars. That's why an obvious move was to go abroad for French Turbos, where designs are more advanced. However, Amtrak has been working on equipment designs, and the final decision is now at a high management level, and some announcement could be expected in the near future.

Amtrak has been creating the environment in which car makers would come forward with ideas and designs. At first there was generally no interest in producing cars for the corporation, as people thought that trains would not be around for long. Now, in the past several months, enthusiasm is showing itself for industry to try to sell new equipment to the corporation.

One of Amtrak's major ideas about new cars is to design them so they can be easily converted to different types and configurations--say, convert a coach to a sleeper; put seats on sliding tracks so they can be moved about flexibly to create different arrangements of seating and seating capacity.

There are four major factors required of a travel vehicle, said Graham: transportation, sleep, eating, and sightseeing. Of these, only the train combines them all. He has no doubt that Amtrak will continue to expand. There's now a $30 billion leisure market in the U.S. and trains will certainly have a place in it. About 70-75% of train travelers are pleasure riders. This means a lot of people will be wanting to ride trains for leisure time pursuits in this growing market. Now is the time to re-think the travel modes of the whole nation. We're spending almost $100 million dollars a day on highways, and Amtrak's $93 million subsidy for the next fiscal year is small alongside that figure.



In terms of the eating requirement, Mr. Graham believes that the public has changed; most are no longer interested in "dining service," but rather in "eating service." As examples, look at McDonald Hamburgers and Colonel Sanders chicken. "Most passengers want just a steak sandwich and beer," said Graham. Then why, we asked, do all glowing writeups in the media about the trains improving always mention the "snowy white linen" as nearly the first thing one notices? Mr. Graham agreed that there is a market for that, but in general people prefer more informal eating now.

What about meals included in the ticket price? The trouble with that, said Graham, is that then you must feed both those who do and those who don't want to eat. Better to keep the basic fare down and let people buy as they want, he believes. In fact, passengers are encouraged to bring their own bag lunches, he said.

The marketing of passenger trains to a public that has not generally ridden them for decades, if ever, is a challenge, and fraught with unknowns and risks. Mr. Graham has an important job to do, and we wish him the best.

Photo above: SUPER CHIEF symbolizes Amtrak marketing at its best.

Concord Line Opens

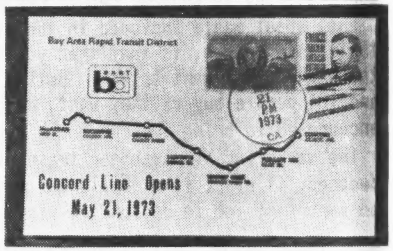
Photo from Message Media.

The third segment of the Bay Area Rapid Transit's rail system opened to the public on May 21, as scheduled. The day dawned with the typical patchy, cooling fog, slowly warming into a lovely summery afternoon. A good-sized crowd had gathered at Oakland's MacArthur Station, the transfer point to and from the line to Concord, Calif. Several VIP trains ran back and forth on the route. Over and over from the P.A. speakers came the admonition to stay back from the edge of the platform and to "obey all safety rules of BART"--this more than on any previous occasion. The crowd seemed in higher spirits than at earlier openings--perhaps because of the warming weather and their growing familiarity with the system, leading to a loss of caution in the vicinity of trains.

Precisely at 1:00 the first revenue train was opened for loading, and the line was officially in business. Our RTN correspondent was aboard the first train heading to Concord (see photo above). First stop, the attractive Rockridge station in Oakland, elevated in a freeway median above College Avenue, where interesting views of trains and other traffic below await the spectator. Then the highlight of the trip, the 3.8 mile long tunnel thru the Oakland-Berkeley hills, taken at 80mph. The train managed full speed the entire trip, with stops at Orinda, Lafayette, Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill, and Concord, all in Contra Costa County east of the hills that ring the bay.

This line will be a boon to the many commuters from Contra Costa to San Francisco when the transbay line opens--weary commuters who now must either drive the oppressive drive daily or endure the uncomfortable Greyhound service. Riders enjoyed watching the cars in the adjoining freeway, seemingly poking along in comparison to the train's 80 mph speed. BART has been experiencing equipment problems since the new line opening, and apparently only the eventual accumulation of more, reliably functioning equipment will permit steady service without resort to manual control and speed reductions.

NOW READY! Our specially designed souvenir postcard commemorating the BART Concord Line opening. Specially hand-cancelled at Concord & carried aboard the 1st revenue train (photo does not show it, but cards will bear inscription to indicate this). All franked with railroad stamps. Sorry, but extremely limited supply requires we limit orders to 2 per customer. $1 each (Californians add tax). Message Media, Box 9007, Berkeley CA, 94709.



MIDWEST SAMPLER

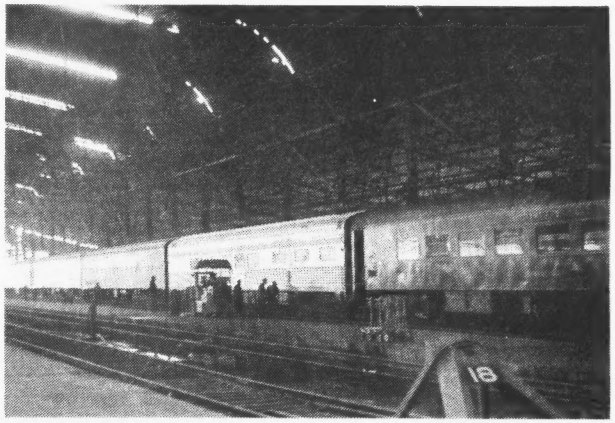
by PETER PUTNAM BRETZ

I had time and funds enough on this occasion to sample some trains of Amtrak's Midwest operations and at the same time complete some trackage that had been blank spots on my rail travel map for some time.

I began things over the Santa Fe from Topeka, Kansas to Kansas City aboard the TEXAS CHIEF. The train left Topeka on a sunny May 9 morning one hour 33 minutes late. The conductor said that bad track in Oklahoma and Texas puts the train late almost every run. Making up ten minutes, we arrived at Kansas City at 8:13am. Bringing up the rear of the train was the round-end ex-CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR car "Silver Penthouse." This was the same car that held the markers of the CZ when I rode it back in 1968. The curtains were gone from the lounge windows, however. Upon checking into the drawing room--yes, the shower bath was intact and apparently still working. The porter mentioned that the rear trucks on the sleeper ("Pine Grove") were bad and had been bouncing people out of bed. This car had been written up days previously, but not repaired. The unhappy passengers had been transferred to the CZ car for the rest of the night, he told me.

Sitting there on one of the station tracks at Kansas City Union Station was the CIVIC PLAZA NATIONAL BANK EXPRESS. Mr. Alex Barkett, President of the bank, purchased a consist of original 1936 DENVER ZEPHYR equipment from the BN, including parlor-observation car "Silver Flash." He's been having trouble with Amtrak for allegedly high prices charged by them to operate the train. Altho one of the big railroads in the area has passed the train for safe operation, it still appears that Amtrak won't let him operate, for reasons unknown.

Anyway, I boarded Amtrak No. 30, the NATIONAL LIMITED, for my first ride to St. Louis over the Missouri Pacific. We left on time and ran over fairly smooth roadbed. I found excellent service in the dining car for breakfast. As the conductor



The NATIONAL LIMITED, then still known as the SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS, rested at the big St. Louis depot in late 1971 when editor James Russell snapped this photo.

came thru the diner, he removed his hat in the finest railroad tradition. Talking with him later, we asked his opinion of the wearability of the new Amtrak uniforms. He allowed that his coat was too scratchy and the shirt had no breast pockets. In fact his wife cut his shirt down to short sleeves and used the extra material for a breast pocket.

We generally lost a few minutes at each check point because of slow running orders and re-routed BN freights due to Missouri River flooding. The water was quite

high, but no delays to our train. We were 23 minutes late out of Jefferson City, but only nine late arriving at St. Louis. I was astonished, but not surprised, to see only a few tracks left under the great train shed. Our train occupied one track, the PRAIRIE STATE the next track.

As we pulled out of St. Louis only 12 minutes late, conductor Paul Cullen gave a little speech to passengers about the skyline of the city that we could see while passing over the high Mississippi River bridge. He pointed out the baseball stadium, the famous arch, and even the high water mark of the flooding a week before. He advised getting a pillow now, as Illinois charges the least sales tax. Wishing us a pleasant trip, he thanked us for taking Amtrak.

Rolling along at a high rate of speed, it became apparent immediately that talk about the bad Penn Central roadbeds was no exaggeration. Riding the lefthand track all the way to Indianapolis, the ride was so rough that I found it hard to walk thru the cars, let alone eat in the diner. And we were not going 10mph, but a good 60-70. The PC diner that had ridden so well over the Mopac pitched and rolled and yawed between Effingham and Terre Haute. With my coffee cup only a quarter full, it still managed to spill out. Trying to eat a full meal under these conditions was not appealing to me, so I settled for a ham sandwich. The food was still good, however, the PC ice cream, as always, delicious on the apple pie.

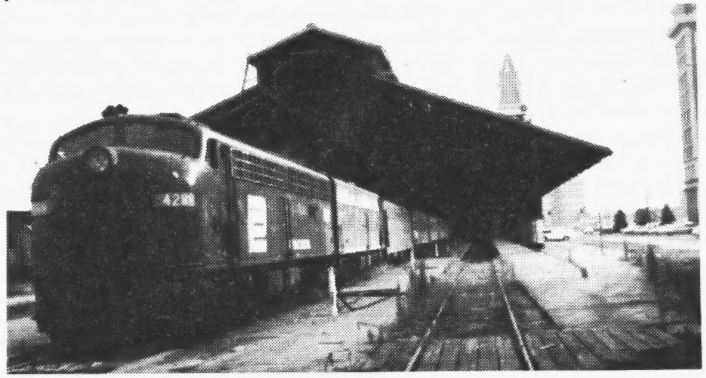
Returning to the Autoliner coach, I found the ride was acceptable, altho jerky. Little did I know of the further horrors the Penn Central had in store for me that night.

Arriving in Indianapolis 35mins late, I determined to travel on to Richmond, Indiana. The cost was $3.50. We left 52mins late, but made up 22mins, arriving in Richmond at 10pm. Taking a Greyhound bus back to Indianapolis, I noted the cost was $4.05, or 55¢ more than Amtrak over the same route. Greyhound presented the "don't suport Amtrak" pamphlet with my ticket. Talking with the driver, I learned that the 49-passenger MCI-7's (the Super 7's) will be changed inside in all future production models to 43 seats. Reason: too many passenger complaints about cramped seating. Ah, yes. Next time take the train.

The NATIONAL LIMITED today: hauled by a GG-1 electric at Gap, Pennsylvania on May 6. When Ken Maylath tripped his shutter the train was about 2 hours late, heading East with SP, UP and Amtrak cars, and baggage on the rear. This train, along with the FLORIDIAN, are proposed for discontinuance by the Dept. of Transportation.

But not the Penn Central in Indiana if you can help it. I was purposely avoiding the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY thru Lafayette because of the infamous track, so I had opted to go to Chicago on the FLORIDIAN via Logansport to check the equipment and get a good night's sleep. It was a vain hope.

The FLORIDIAN left an hour late, but arrived in Chicago at 7:08, almost on time. But between! I have never before experienced such rough and dangerous track. Sleep was almost impossible. We held our speed down to about 25mph all the way to Logansport with occasional bursts up to 40 or so. Then, slowing to 25 again I would wait for the rough track. CRASH! BANG BANG! WRENCH! and the whole car would shake and



The southbound FLORIDIAN was caught in the camera lens of Doug Ellis in July of last year at Louisville, Kentucky

vibrate. BOOM BOOM BANG CRASH again and again and again. Other passengers seemed visibly shaken. It seemed that the trucks would strike a high rail joint, leap up in the air, do a little snake dance and hopefully land back down on the rails again. Obviously it <u>really</u> didn't do that, but it really <u>felt</u> like it. I remembered Paul Rayton's trip and his fright in the sleeper (see RTN, Vol. 2, No. 13), but that happened below Indianapolis, I thought, not above there. All thru the night, BANG BANG, WRENCH, TWIST, BAAANGGG!! Never did I appreciate the Southern Pacific's smooth roadbed more. I would recommend to Amtrak to immediately discontinue all train service over these bad Penn Central tracks before someone is killed by a derailment, arrange their own track maintenance, and deduct the cost from the money they pay the Penn Central. In the meantime, I wait for more news of possible derailments and wrecks from the East. Or am I exaggerating? Perhaps the coach I was in (Amtrak 5248--ex-NKP PS 1950) was old and bad. But as a woman passenger said the next morning, "My daughter convinced me to take the train from Miami. Never again!"

After that harrowing experience, the next rail sampler was a small side trip down the Illinois Central electric and the new Highliners. We found them quite comfortable, but similar to doubledeck equipment elsewhere. Not as many front-facing seats in the upper level as some, tho; mainly back-to-window seating.

For a change of pace trip--the Rock Island. I found myself walking "one of the great halls of our youth"--Chicago's La Salle Street Station. Chips of plaster hung from the echoing walls, but crowds of commuters rushing toward their trains. The tracks were full of Rock Island push-pull equipment, cars with drop-center doors painted olive drab and other cars bright red and other cars bright red with a yellow stripe. All commuter cars had the words "welcome aboard" next to the entrance doors. I noticed RI engine #750 heading one of the trains. The 750 was a specially designed "B" unit with a cab and headlight that the RI used for many years on the Colorado Springs-Limon leg of the ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROCKET's run.

I had booked passage on the QUAD CITIES ROCKET this May 10 in the "chartered club lounge" run by DePorter Butterworth Tours, Inc. of Moline. The car was indeed what what I had expected: a dome-observation parlor car, completely refurbished inside by

Autoliner and Mildred Draper Interiors of Omaha. It was an ex-Rio Grande dome-chair observation used on the ROYAL GORGE and later the YAMPA VALLEY MAIL. It was originally built for the CHESSIE by Pullman-Standard in 1948. Painted in the Butterworth colors of Navy blue and silver, its new name "Big Ben." The car runs in rear-end operation Chicago-Rock Island, but is not turned for the return trip. For one price, passengers get hors d'oeuvres and snacks in the evening, free newspapers, lounge tables in the dome, parlor seats, and complimentary meals in the club-diner. There are four entrees to choose from, including steak. The diner is open to all passengers, but parlor car patrons ignore the prices listed on the menu.

We left right on time with the parlor car almost full. As we passed the suburban line junction later, I spotted an RI E-6 unit on a two-car push-pull train. The track turned out to be fairly bad--not as bad as the PC, having sections of good rail but mostly garbage. I could see the dips and swirls of the rails from the observation car window.

Dinner in the diner was a very enjoyable experience, what with snowy linen, flowers, and piping hot food. I had picked the sirloin butt steak, at over $4 on the menu. It arrived looking mouth-watering, along with au gratin potatoes, baby limas, and a nice lettuce wedge salad served with a steak knife. Topped off with a strawberry sundae for dessert, I felt fat and sassy. This car, incidentally, was Rock Island #411, a coffee shop-tavern car built in 1947 for the GOLDEN STATE and named "Golden Bowl."

Both coaches on the train were also well-patronized. The train ran about 15mins late on down the line, where I got off at Bureau, No. 5-9 departing there at 8:12pm. Bureau turned out to have a rather rural setting. As I waited for the PEORIA ROCKET in the gathering dusk, kids were playing, dogs barking and screen doors slamming in the background, reminding me of Winston Link's recordings of N&W steam in Virginia. The station building's white paint was chipped and pitted. An inviting fountain stood near the platform, but a drink revealed bitter water with a high mineral content.

Also about 15mins late, No.11's headlight lit the night "comin' round the bend," and it screeched to a stop. The equipment on this train was equally as interesting as the previous ROCKET. Bringing up the rear was an 11-bedroom sleeper "Belleville." Altho the vestibule door retained the name plate, the outside was in Butterworth colors and named "Bonnie B." Arrival in Peoria was 20mins late at 10pm. We didn't stop at the main downtown station, but at an auxiliary building to the north of the city.

A trip the next day to Bloomington, courtesy of Illini-Swallow bus lines, took me to the northbound ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Due to a broken air hose on a freight train near St. Louis, #302-323 left Bloomington 1hr 7mins late. Carrying the markers was "Silver Terrace," a non-refurbished dome-parlor-square back observation built for the KANSAS CITY ZEPHYR. A clergyman occupying one of the parlor seats in this car was puffing away on a huge, smelly cigar. I asked him if he was aware of the Amtrak rule against pipe or cigar smoking in any parlor car. I showed him the rule printed in the public timetable, but he said the porter had given him permission to smoke anyway. I inquired of the porter, who stated that he had worked for the railroad for over 30 years and people have <u>always</u> smoked in parlor cars. But look at this rule, I pointed out. "No," he said, "I won't do anything. Nobody told <u>me</u> about any rule. You got to talk to the conductor."

Well, I confronted not the conductor but a trainman, who in essence said, after I showed him the rule, "If you don't like it, <u>you</u> move." The clergyman offerred to smoke up in the dome, if anyone else complained. At that, a lady spoke up that she was suffering from the stink all the way from St. Louis. If Amtrak isn't about to run its own trains, or obey its own rules--then does <u>anything</u> go? Can passengers then stand on the vestibule when the train is in motion, or flush toilets while the train is standing at a station? Or not respect the conductor's authority anymore? Of course not. And Amtrak should honor its rules.

Thru Pontiac 1hr 11min late, and Joliet 1hr 19 late. It was interesting that the tracks merged with the parallel Santa Fe at Joliet for the station stop--of course the Rock Island crosses there too--and then split away again right after the station to go up on either side of the Illinois River. Arrived Union Station 2:38pm--1hr 18min late.

Oh yes, in the dining facilities, I enjoyed two unusual dishes for Amtrak. An asparagus soup which was quite tasty, even tho I generally don't care for the vegetable, and a Ruben Sandwich--the first time I've even seen it offerred on the railroads. It's corned beef, sauerkraut and Swiss cheese--grilled. The Illinois Central Gulf prepared it superbly. Coming past the yards in Chicago, I spotted Burlington engine #5629, a 4-6-2 steam locomotive in excellent looking shape.

Finally, I walked another great hall, this time Northwestern Station in Chicago, now exclusively commuter. And I took a bi-level push-pull train up the left-hand track of the Wisconsin Division to Jefferson Park. There a direct connection via CTA to O'Hare Airport, and thence home.

THE TRAINS PETER RODE

Below are the consists of the trains reported upon by Mr. Bretz in the accompanying article, with a few notes upon selected cars by the author:

<u>TEXAS CHIEF</u>: Four FP-7's (ABAB), high-level coaches, dorm-lounge, refurbished 1937 Santa Fe diner, sleeper "Pine Grove" (10 & 6), "Silver Penthouse" (ex-CALIF. ZEPHYR 1 drawing room-3 bedroom dome lounge observation car with fishtail configuration).

<u>NATIONAL LIMITED</u>: Penn Central E units 4308 & 4306, baggage, sleeper SP 9023, sleeper Santa Fe "Pine Dale" (both 10 & 6 sleepers, with 6 thru passengers L.A.-N.Y.), Penn Central grill-diner (ex-NYC Budd 1948), Amtrak 4418 (ex-SP 44-seat leg rest coach), "Prairie Sunset," a 44-seat leg rest coach owned by Autoliner and numbered 5401, ex-UP, built by Pullman-Standard in 1950.

<u>PRAIRIE STATE</u>: 3 Amtrak coaches, GN coach in Big Sky Blue (68-seat chair car rebuilt from a 2-bedroom, 1-drawing room lounge observation made for the 1947 EMPIRE BUILDER), ex-NORTH COAST LIMITED diner in BN green, and "Silver Tower," the disco-pub car that sports a dome, a player piano, and a square-back observation section built for the KANSAS CITY ZEPHYR.

<u>FLORIDIAN</u>: 2 Amtrak E units (#220 & 456), deadheading PC buffet-lounge 4448, 3 Santa Fe baggage cars, Amtrak coach 5249, diner 8082, ex-ACL "La Grange" (SCL 10 & 6 sleeper), "Birmingham," (SCL 11-bedroom sleeper), "Tallahassee," and Amtrak 5248. Both coaches were ex-Nickel Plate.

<u>QUAD CITIES ROCKET</u>: 2 E-8 units (655 & 659), baggage (ACF 1953), 2 48-seat chair cars: RI 340 built for GOLDEN STATE service and RI 347 for the GOLDEN ROCKET, and named originally "Golden Flute" and "Valle Verde" respectively; club-diner RI 411 (coffee shop-tavern built 1947 for GOLDEN STATE and named "Golden Bowl"; and the dome parlor described in the text operated by Butterworth Tours.

<u>PEORIA ROCKET</u>: RI E unit 652, 68-seat coach #334 "Colorado Springs," two coaches from the M&St. L. RR: "El Reno" and "Herrington", diner #428 ("El Comedor," 36 seats, built for GOLDEN ROCKET), and on the rear an 11-bedroom sleeper "Belleville" (ex-Illinois Central PS-1953, in Butterworth colors and renamed "Bonnie B."

<u>ABRAHAM LINCOLN</u>: GM&O and PC E units, Amtrak 4825 coach (ex-Santa Fe), NP 530 (silver-sided ex-MKT 64-seat coach "New Braunfels"--Pullman-Standard 1955), NP 586 (2-tone green 56-seat chair car--Pullman-Standard 1954), GN Big Sky Blue dome coach 1327 (built for mid-century EMPIRE BUILDER), UP 48-seat diner #4812 used as diner-lounge, and on the rear "Silver Terrace," a dome-parlor-square-back observation built for the KANSAS CITY ZEPHYR, non-refurbished.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please bear in mind that comments in the above article about discontinuing certain Midwestern trains are to be taken as rhetorical statements, to highlight the problems that are already well-known on these trains. It is RTN's stance to oppose the Dept. of Transportation's recommendation to discontinue the

FLORIDIAN and the NATIONAL LIMITED. Because of the bad track problems on these routes, patronage has suffered. The sane thing to do is to repair the track and retain these needed trains, not to lop them off because bad running conditions have diminished patronage, as the DOT ding-a-lings would have Amtrak do.

canadian news letter

IS CANADIAN NATIONAL beginning to see the light regarding the social need for rail services? We hope so. And a speech by CN's Executive V.P.-Finance & Administration, Dr. Robert A. Bandeen at the symposium "Transportation-Today & Tomorrow" in Toronto on May 11 allows room for some optimism. Let us quote Dr. Bandeen at some length: "I share wholeheartedly in the conviction that we must come to grips with problems arising from the demand for increased and expanded rail passenger services. But you have to face up to the plain fact that passenger trains do not make money. If they did our problems in that quarter would be simplified. However, the sad truth is they do not generate enough revenue to offset their operating costs; there is no surplus for research and experimentation. They are simply not, on the whole, commercially viable.

"Nevertheless, paradoxically tho it may appear, the passenger train remains an economically and sociologically sound form of transport. By this I mean, the passenger train is a less costly mode for moving large volumes of people thru urban areas than the combination of public roadways and private cars. Thus, the passenger train merits recognition as an essential form of transport. And, I submit, one which is of increasing relevance to the needs of our modern environment.

"I think it naive to believe that urban society will be able to rely in the future on the highway and the private car to satisfy its mass transportation requirements. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, it will have to turn to alternate modes such as the passenger train. Consequently, rail passenger services will have to be expanded between urban areas, and a form--or form--of passenger trains specially developed for rapid transit in and between modern urban communities...

"Let us go to the crux of the matter. Our railways are already heavily burdened with unprofitable passenger services--even on those routes subsidized up to 80% by the Canadian Transport Commission. Railways are manifestly not able under present circumstances to initiate additional passenger trains are likely to also prove unprofitable. Nor are they prepared to underwrite on their own the total costs of research required to create a new generation of rolling stock. The logical conclusion is that since society will be the ultimate beneficiary from an expansion of rail passenger services, society should--and shall inevitably--pick up the tab. The costs might be on a shared and equitable basis between municipal, provincial and federal governments."

Bandeen, who some have likened to the B. F. Biaggini of Canada, surprised many in his talk by making positive statements about passenger services. However, he is mainly considering corridor-type trains, and not long-distance routes such as the SUPER CONTINENTAL that is the current topic of controversy. But it is very significant that Bandeen has termed passenger trains "economically and sociologically sound." His statement that government must pick up the tab for development of new trains appears quite right. One hopes that out of the thinking that he expressed

IMPORTANT NOTICE.....RENO WEEKEND OVERNIGHTER has been rescheduled for June 23 & 24. There is still some space available. This is one of those rare opportunities to sleep on board a Private Pullman while parked at Sparks for overnight occupancy.Upper Berth $35;Lower Berth $40;Kmette $45;Bdrm for (1)$75;Bdrm for (2) total$65. Fares include transportation, sleeping car space, Reno Fun Pack, Shuttle service and Champagne. Contact C. McDaniel 415-271-8038 days; 415-839-9807 evenings.

will emerge some action that will be advantageous for Canada, now grappling with transportation problems well known to citizens of the States...

CANADIAN PACIFIC HAS broken the ATLANTIC LIMITED's connection with the CANADIAN for the summer season (June 24-Sept. 2) by scheduling that Montreal-St. John train to leave Montreal 1hr 45mins earlier. The connection is restored on Sept. 3. Since there is only one train per day on both the transcontinental run and the ATLANTIC LIMITED, a 22-hour layover is required in Montreal for those making the thru trip from the West. The westbound connection is continued thru the summer...

BESIDES THIS MOVE, Canadian Pacific with the summer timetable has broken the connection between the CANADIAN at Sudbury (where Montreal and Toronto sections combine westbound and separate eastbound) and Rail Diesel Car runs to Sault Ste. Marie. Formerly, RDC's left Sudbury westbound for the Soo shortly after midnight and returned to Sudbury at 9am on the 3hr, 45min run. Now, the run is 8am west from Sudbury, returning at 8:45pm. This makes the daily runs mainly of local appeal, and serving as a market train to the Soo area on the U.S. border, instead of mainline feeders...

CONSTRUCTION WORK HAS begun on relocation of Canadian Pacific's main line between Donald and Beavermouth, B.C., near the eastern foot of Rogers Pass. The Columbia River will be raised at this point by the new Mica Dam north of Revelstoke, flooding portions of the existing right of way. The 800-ft earthfill Mica Dam, one of the largest in North America, is the last of 3 dams to be built in B.C. as part of the Columbia water treaty signed with the U.S. in the early 1960's. CP Rail's CANADIAN dome trains pass the construction area both ways in daylight during summer...

THE CURRENT ISSUE of widely-read Macleans magazine carried a 2-page color ad by CN that was reminiscent of the SP's "We Want to Run Passenger Trains" ads in 1959-1960 that started the SP series of anti-train advertising. The text has been described as simply a trendy paraphrasing of SP's old ads--all about how CN runs good trains where the public wants them, but that the public must realize little-used trains must be axed, that diners are "frankly" getting a little expensive to operate. The ad is signed with CN's latest P.R. line, "We'd like you to know more about us"...

FIRST TRIP OF Canadian National's modified Turbo Trains between Toronto & Montreal will take place June 22. The trip takes 4hrs 10mins. The consist is: Power dome club car with 8 dome & 22 regular seats; Turboclub car with 16 non-smoking & 24 smoking seats; Turboclub car; Turbo Coach (non-smoking); Cafe Turbo coach (38 seat); 2 Turbo Coaches; Cafe Turbo Coach; and Power dome Turbo coach with lounge for coach passengers. Train capacity is 110 club seats (16 non-smoking), 268 Turbo coach seats (54 non-smoking), and 24 lounge seats for coach riders. There are three sets of Turbo equipment for the run...

LIVE MUSIC WILL be provided on the ferries running between Vancouver & Victoria and Vancouver & Nanaimo this summer, starting June 25. Musicians will also entertain travelers at ferry terminals at Tsawwassen, Horseshoe Bay, Swartz Bay, and Departure Bay. The program, announced by Transportation Minister Robert Strachan May 31, will cost $30-40 thousand for the hiring of eight groups at union rates...

STANDARD CONSIST OF CN's SUPER CONTINENTAL this summer is: express and mail cars; Dayniter car; 3 76-seat coaches; cafe lounge; 6-6-4 sleeper; 4-8-4 sleeper; 48-seat diner; Sceneramic dome (Vancouver-Jasper only); sleeper lounge (Jasper-Montreal); two 10-6 sleepers; 4-8-4 sleeper; 24-roomette sleeper for crew car. One of the coaches is for unreserved seats Winnipeg-Montreal...

OTHER CN TRAINS: the OCEAN carries 4 sleepers, the SCOTIAN runs 3 sleepers, and the CHALEUR is assigned 2 sleeping cars (a 6-6-4 and a 10-6)...

UNLIKE AMTRAK, CN offers its family fare plan on all days of the week...

H.R.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II and Prince Phillip may ride on Toronto's 1920's "Peter Witt" streetcars during the Royal Visit to Toronto this summer. The Royal Party will travel by private train on some of their tour...

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"This obstruction of Amtrak's attempt to reroute its (TEXAS CHIEF) train threatens a violation of the policies of the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970. (SP's legal brief) brings out fantastic images of crippled little old ladies being thrown about wildly gyrating passenger cars while (SP) is willing to toss freight trains off the track."

--Amtrak spokesman commenting on disputed Dallas-Houston routing, quoted in Houston Chronicle, May 31

"Auto-Train, in its 19 months of operation, has carried about 250,000 passengers, mostly from the Northeast and D.C. area--proving that Americans do take trains if accommodations are pleasant. Although Auto-Train has done a minimum of advertising and the service is premium-priced, it is enjoying rising profits, thanks to the rush of customers. Moreover, it promises to fare even better as its popularity increases and service is expanded. ...a new route (Louisville to Sanford, Fla.) will be announced shortly."

--Margaret D. Pacey in Barron's, June 4

"It is difficult to understand how the Southern Pacific Railroad can be absolved of sharing blame for the explosions of bomb-carrying cars east of Benson last week, when investigations have virtually ruled out sabotage as the cause of the accident. There is no way to excuse Southern Pacific--or any railroad, trucking line, air carrier--from responsibility for its own operation."

--Tucson, AZ Daily Star editorial, June 5

"It is hard to understand why representatives of the Southern Pacific Co. have declined to meet with city and county officials to discuss ways by which the railroads might route the munitions-laden trains around urban areas. It is unbecoming for a major public carrier to take such an antipublic attitude on something as vital to public safety as transporting explosives through residential areas."

--Sacramento Bee editorial, June 7

"Once again the Assembly has agreed to allow Californians to vote on a constitutional amendment to permit the use of a portion of the gas tax and motor vehicle fees for public transit and control of environmental pollution caused by motor vehicles. It is a good measure. But, once again, there are fears that the Senate will kill the proposal, as it did in 1971 and 1972. That should not happen. In the past two years transportation problems and smog have worsened, and we are now confronted with a gasoline shortage. Thus all signs point to the urgent need for tapping this high source of funds for transit and pollution control."

--Los Angeles Times editorial, June 4

"There is no energy crisis. There is a competition crisis."

--Daniel S. Dearing of Florida's dept. of legal affairs, quoted by the Washington Post

"All across Western Europe, from Britain to Italy, the national railroads are going forward with plans for new trains and track capable of top speeds ranging from 155 to 186 miles an hour by 1980. ...French and West German rail technicians say that 186-mile-an-hour service is economically feasible with conventional, altho very advanced, equipment and tracks. Above that speed, and far in the future, they see such developments as tracked air-cushion vehicles."

--Edward C. Burks in New York Times, June 10

"Don't take life so seriously that you somehow miss the joy and wonder of it. The world can be a serious place, but sprinkled throughout it there can and should be humor and good spirits. Enjoy these moments."

--Transportation Secretary Claude Brinegar, at graduation ceremony of Coast Guard Academy, New London, 6/6

mixed train of thoughts

SUFFERING "TSUKIN JIGOKU" is how the Japanese describe commuting ("commuting hell") and "No-Car Day" in Tokyo June 5 was as crowded as ever, as people apparently ignored the government proclamation. But Cabinet Ministers took public transport or walked to work, though the Prime Minister decided to use a car for security reasons..... AN AMTRAK POST on the Board of Directors could go to Thomas M. Pelly, longtime Congressman from Seattle. He would succeed Catherine May Bedell from Yakima who left the board last year..... GOLDEN SPIKE DRIVING, this time a re-enactment of the completion of the Alaska Railroad, will be held in Nenana, Alaska on July 15. It's the 50th anniversary of the railroad..... FREE BUS SERVICE for the county is one of the propositions of mayor candidate Tim Hill in Seattle.....

* * *

THE AUTO-tRAIN was delayed six hours on June 1 when a derailment occurred on the RF&P between Lorton Rd. and the Gunston Cove Road crossover in Alexandria, VA. Reader Adron F. Hall reports the southbound SILVER STAR was re-routed from D.C. via Southern to Orange, VA then on C&O to Doswell, VA, and back on the RF&P. The northbound took the detour in reverse order. The southbound SILVER METEOR was the first Amtrak train to pass the wreck scene, with RF&P office car "One" (not in Amtrak colors) on the rear with RF&P president on the platform viewing the wreck. The Washington Chapter of the NRHS was happy to have the wreck cleared for their Saturday (June 2) Amtrak-operated special from D.C. to Richmond,VA. the roundtrip excursion carried about 475 persons, and the train featured two E units, 8 PC corridor coaches, and a snack bar-coach from the discontinued POTOMAC SPECIAL..... TWO GROUPS OF rail buffs are setting out from opposite coasts of the U.S. to travel across country on handcars over the rails. The westbound group is headed by W. Graham Claytor III, son of the President of Southern Railway. Their main problem is said to be getting the railroads to let them use the track during the heavy summer season..... MAY AUTOMOBILE SALES reached the highest point in history in the country: 1,145,304 new cars last month, 11% higher than May of last year..... THE OWNER OF the Yreka Western Railroad Co. in California has purchased the assets of the LK&P Railroad in Maui, Hawaii, and his company is named Railroads of Hawaii, Inc. In late June, scenic tours on the road will begin, including one 400-foot trestle..... AMERICAN AIRLINES ANNOUNCED this month a reduction in advance-reservation transcontinental air fares, discounts up to 48%. That would make coast-to-coast air travel as low as $89.50 one way in winter midweek. This move is to match a similar reduction made recently by TWA..... OLDTIME FERRYBOAT "BERKELEY" left San Francisco May 31, being towed to San Diego for placement in a maritime museum. It had carried commuter across the bay for 50 years before retirement to the Sausalito waterfront..... CHURCHILL'S "LYDIA" CAR, recently on the FLYING SCOTSMAN on display in San Francisco, was seen June 2 passing thru Sacramento northbound on Western Pacific, at 11am, 6 or 7 cars behind a gondola with smoking trucks. It's windows were boarded up and it was lashed onto a flat car. Destination where?..... MOST COMMENTED UPON item in our last issue: that "1776" baggage car on the SUPER CHIEF proved to be a steam generator car used since the FP45 engines went on.....

LOWER SPEED LIMITS FOR AUTOMOBILES?

Reduction of highway speed limits has been proposed as a means of conserving gasoline. The Senate has asked state governors to take steps to see that motorists drive more slowly. State speed limits should be reduced by 10mph or cut to 55, whichever is greater. At least one newspaper, the Seattle Times, immediately editorialized in favor of the move. Russell Train, chairman of the President's Council on Environmental Quality in a Washington speech June 13 asked Americans to use smaller cars, drive slower, form car pools, ride bikes, walk, and use public transportation.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT (continued from page 5)

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR BAY AREA UNVEILED

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission, covering 9 counties around the San Francisco Bay Area, made public June 11 at a public meeting the draft of an overall transportation plan for the area. More public meetings were being scheduled to obtain citizen reaction to the beginning transportation plan. Many of the points in the plan pertain to methods of financing transport needs of the future. Some suggestions made were additional vehicle registration charges for multiple-car families, extra fuel and registration charges for high-powered cars, more gasoline taxes, regional parking taxes, airport ticket taxes, and continuation of the BART ½-cent sales tax.

TRANSIT NEWS BRIEFS:

A PENN CENTRAL express commuter train crashed into a local train at Mt. Vernon, NY the evening of June 8, killing one commuter and injuring over 100 others, including Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky...

A FEDERAL JUDGE has just approved a plan by which the Reading Railroad's commuter operations would be taken over by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). Seven commuter lines in the Philadelphia are involved, but not the Philadelphia-New York runs. The Reading is presently in bankruptcy...

BART'S MORNING COMMUTER service is running 25% ahead of the goal BART had set. In May the daily crowd numbered an average of 8965. Opening of the Concord line has increased traffic on the entire system. Now BART is worried, however, that it cannot meet its September 24 date of opening of the final line to San Francisco. The city is worried too because it is inviting President Nixon and other dignitaries for a special opening celebration, and wants a firm date...

GRAND CENTRAL STATION in NY will close from 1:30am to 5:30am starting July 2, and the Penn Central is dropping several night trains for economy reasons. (The railroad has asked that the deadline of July 2 for filing its reorganization plan be extended to allow Congress time to act)...

A BART STRIKE could be called as early as June 19. Members of the United Public Employees union voted to seek strike authorization June 7. The issue is salaries paid employees who have transferred to BART from other transportation jobs...

ATLANTIC RICHFIELD COMPANY in Los Angeles is planning to give employees company-supported bus service to and from work, beginning July 2. Employees will pay $25 a month for the service, with the oil company contributing $15...

BART OPENED A bid on May 31 for a contract to protect its transbay tube from damage due to ships' anchors...

PATH COMMUTER SERVICE between New Jersey and Manhattan is to be increased in price 67% beginning July 29/ The 30¢ fare will go to 50¢...

BART WAS TO decide June 14 whether to build a 2½-mile test track near the Hayward yards to allow testing equipment off the main line. It would cost $2.5 to $3 million...

"BIGGEST DIAL-A-BUS EXPERIMENTin the world" will be started in November in several north central Toronto neighborhoods. Up to 27 buses--some electric-powered, rechargeable battery vehicles--will be used. Most of the service will focus on activity centers, usually stations of the Yonge subway or shopping centers. Seven neighborhoods will be involved. (The Yonge subway extension, Eglinton to York Mills, opened last March 31. Canada's first subway, the Yonge line, opened originally on March 30, 1954...

TORONTO'S TTC WILL buy 88 new subway cars from Hawker-Siddeley Company. The subway system is now short about that number due to dramatic patronage increases...

(continued from page 2)

of miles were run off at 79mph on track that was in many cases not of the quality that exists today. It is a deliberate attempt on the part of the railroads to cover up that which was done in complete safety 20 years ago, and it is for the one purpose, as Mr. Maylath correctly implies, of obstructing the efficacy and further expansion of Amtrak.

We stick to our 4hrs 50mins. What we get may be something different, but the arbitration should surface shortly.

(P.S. The alternate Burlington-Rock Island has 79 miles of 90# rail laid in 1929 from North Zulch to Houston. None of the four railroads involved is an Amtrak member. Crossing protection is much less adequate than SP. No access at present to SP station where all trains should be consolidated for economy. Freight congestion is worse than on SP at certain seasons and facilities less adequate to handle it. The SP route is more marketable due to Texas A&M University which has poor facilities provided by other modes due to remoteness from the interstate highway and only one feeder airline.)

M. D. Monaghan, Member and Technical Adviser,
Dallas City-County Amtrak Committee

Garland, Texas

I especially liked Peter Roehm's story (RTN, Second May Issue), having just come away from High Iron Company's Memorial Day weekend trip from Hoboken to Binghamton, New York and return, behind the ex-Reading T-1, which will apparently keep its D&H number and paint scheme for the rest of the year. Our train likewise had 22 cars (including Amtrak parlor car "Paul Revere" in spotless condition) and about 1000 passengers. Open platform observation "Splendid Spirit," part of High Iron's Freedom Train project (a steam-powered train carrying historical documents and artifacts throughout the 48 states in 1975-76), brought up the rear. Our, too, was a good trip. Would you believe some railfans oiled the rails on the tough climb out of Scranton just to get some driver-slipping action in their home movies? We made the hill, however, without help. The Scranton Lackawanna station was opened for us and surely impressed everyone who entered. A finer station, for its size at least, I have never seen. Luckily, it has been well-maintained.

Al Crossley

Groton, Connecticut

A French technician recently rode the cab of the EMPIRE BUILDER and other Chicago-Milwaukee trains to familiarize himself with the line. This occurrence is reportedly connected with the institution of Turbo Train service between those points late this summer. It is rumored that test runs over the Milwaukee Road will take place in August.

Milwaukee Road has asked the ICC for permission to discontinue its once-daily service between Fox Lake, Illinois and Walworth, Wisconsin. This commuter operation carries about 20 persons in from the shores of Lake Geneva each morning, and will apparently not be subsidized by either Illinois or the North Suburban Mass Transit District, as will the other North Line operations which terminate at Fox Lake or points further south. Earliest possible discontinuance date is September 14. Meanwhile, Milwaukee West Line commuter service will be extended 14.3 miles beyond Elgin to Hampshire at some time in the future.

Mike Blaszak

Park Ridge, Illinois